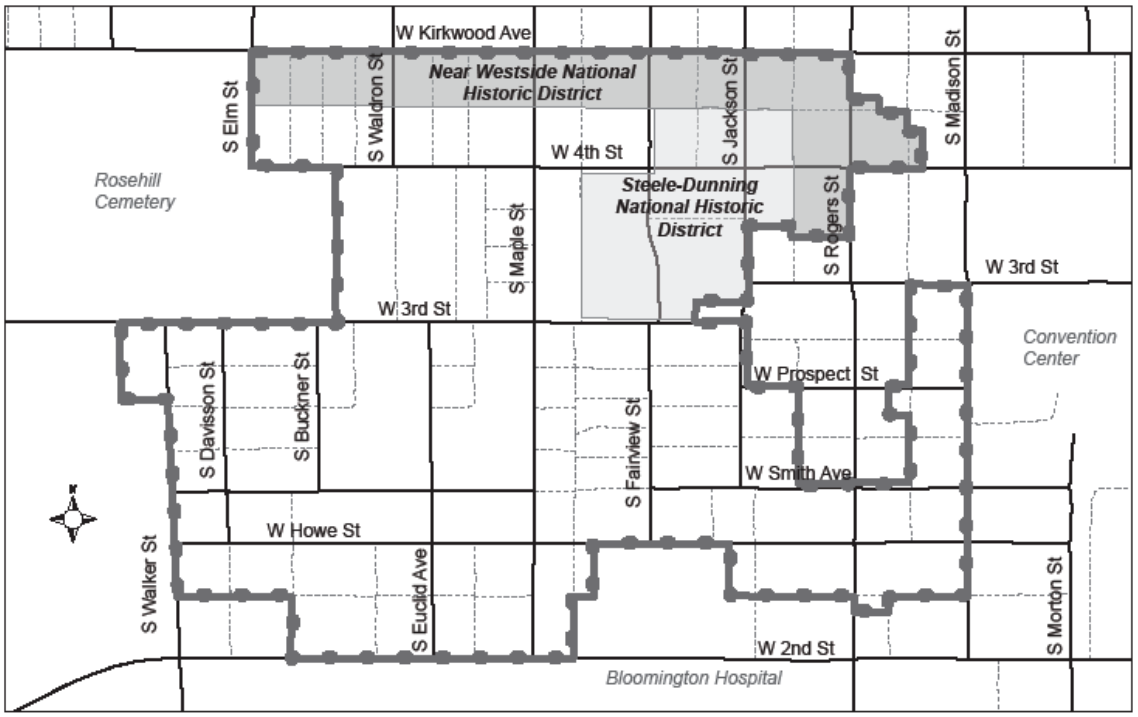
Prospect Hill Conservation District Design Guidelines

DRAFT

Proposed language only

Table of Contents



Prospect Hill Conservation District Boundaries

Shaded areas show sections of the Near West Side and Steele-Dunning National Register Districts that are included.

INTRODUCTION
TRADITIONAL HOUSE FORMS

The area included in the Prospect Hill Conservation district displays remarkably consistent housing forms and styles primarily constructed from the 1890's through the 1930's. There are four predominate forms, some with variations. These forms are not unique to Prospect Hill but illustrative of early working class residential neighborhoods in Bloomington generally. Because the uniformity of its historic housing patterns is a significant characteristic of Prospect Hill, the neighborhood offers defined guidelines for new construction to maintain the appearance and integrity of a historic neighborhood. In Prospect Hill, each historic form is associated with characteristic placement on a lot, setbacks, heights and roof shapes, but these patterns can be influenced by existing grades, setbacks and other irregularities. The Design Guidelines are fashioned to accommodate the many scenarios in Prospect Hill.

The gabled-ell form has a cross-gabled plan with a front porch stretched across the intersecting gables. The house is usually placed with the long side of the house parallel to the street. The entran e
wings facing one
plane much like a
an alley with the
street. In Prospe
show high concer
the 300 blocks of)
block of West Hc
pattern.

A variant of the gabled-
block faces in the 300 b
block of West 4th Street.
similar to the gabled-ell
hipped or pyramidal roo
different. A Pyramidal
appears more massive th
coverage is similar. Thi
and the front porch, alth
recessed or cut-in beneath the principal roof.

The bungalow form is also a single story but can have living space on the second floor with dormer windows providing light. In Prospect Hill the principal structure is usually topped by a single gable or a hipped roof. The front porches are large and comfortable and stretch entirely across the front façade. They can be covered by a gable or a hipped roof. Prospect Hill has several groupings of classic bungalows; some are located in the 700 block of West Third, on South Buckner and South Madison. The roof shapes are simple and the houses are small and compact in scale compared with pyramidal cott

A two story variant of the bungalow is the four square house. These are the most vertical houses in the Prospect Hill Conservation District. Almost always displaying a pyramidal roof, they are massive compared with the typical house. Besides the row of houses of West Fourth, there are only two other examples of four squares in Prospect Hill.

There are two remaining forms which appear scattered

m part of a grouping
bly narrower than any
ıd two to three rooms
eet and the small shed
/ front façade.
th in plan and have
ions were brought up
railroad houses.

Double-pens are another early vernacular form that first appeared in rural areas and are found in Prospect Hill on scattered sites, although there are many in the western part of the district. The house is side gabled and symmetrical from the front elevation. The front porch covers paired front doors.

STANDARDS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

The purpose of these Guidelines is to present flexible approaches to appropriate design in the Prospect Hill conservation area. The goal is to harmonize new buildings with the historic fabric that remains. The guidelines are not meant to restrict creativity, but to set up a framework within which sympathetic design will occur. It should be noted that within an appropriate framework there can be many different design solutions which may be appropriate. While guidelines can create an acceptable framework they cannot ensure any particular result.

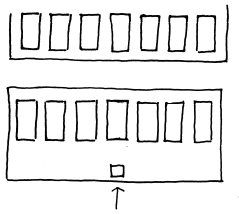
CONTEXT FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

Standards and guidelines serve as aids in designing new construction which reacts sensitively to the existing context. Therefore, the most important first step in designing new construction in any conservation district is to determine just what the context is. “Contributing” properties are important to the density and continuity of the historic neighborhood, but are not individually outstanding or notable. You can find out more in the City of Bloomington Interim Report, on pages 34-41. Each property in the Prospect Hill Study Area is described.

Every site will possess a unique context. This will be comprised of the “contributing” buildings immediately adjacent, the nearby area (often the surrounding block), a unique sub-area within the district, and the district as a whole.

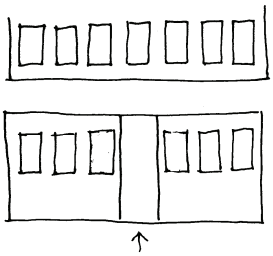
Generally, new construction will occur on sites which fall into the following categories. For each one described below, there is an indication of the context to which new construction must be primarily related.

1. DEVELOPED SITE. This is usually a site upon which there already exists a historic primary structure. New construction usually involves the construction of an accessory building such as a



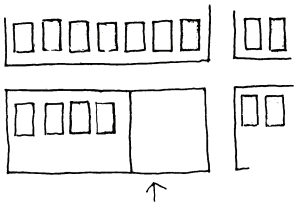
Context. New construction must use the existing historic building as its most important, perhaps only, context.

2. ISOLATED LOT. This is usually a single vacant lot (sometimes two very small lots combined) which exists in a highly developed area with very few if any other vacant lots in view.



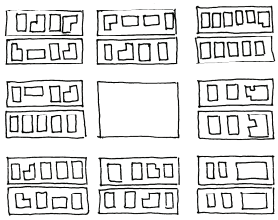
Context. The existing contributing buildings immediately adjacent and in the same block, and the facing block provide a very strong context to which any new construction must primarily relate.

3. LARGE SITE This is usually a combination of several vacant lots, often the result of previous demolition.



Its surrounding context has been weakened by its very existence. However, context is still of primary concern. In such case, a somewhat larger area than the immediate environment must also be looked to for context, especially if other vacant land exists in the immediate area.

4. REDEVELOPMENT SITE. This site may consist of four or more contiguous vacant lots. Often there is much vacant land surrounding the site.



Context. The context of adjacent buildings is often very weak or non-existent. In this case, the surrounding area provides the primary context to the extent that it exists. Beyond that, the entire historic area is the available context for determining character. This type of site often offers the greatest design flexibility. Where the strength of the context varies at different points around a site, new design should be responsive to the varying degrees of contextual influence.

SUBJECT TO REVIEW AND APPROVAL:
All construction of primary buildings is subject to review and approval by the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission (BHPC).
Definition: A primary building is a building or accessory structure occupying a lot. Buildings less than 100 square feet need no approval.

GUIDELINES

The following guidelines relate to the construction of any new primary building. They are enforceable by the BHPC and are subject to its " Review and Approval" by application for a certificate of appropriateness. These guidelines are less comprehensive and less restrictive than for a Historic District.

MATERIALS

Definition: The visual, structural, and performance characteristics of the materials visible on a building exterior.

RECOMMENDED

1. Building materials, whether natural or man-made, should be visually compatible with surrounding historic buildings.
2. When hardboard or concrete board siding is used to simulate wood clapboard siding, it should reflect the general directional and dimensional characteristics found historically in the neighborhood. No products imitating the "grain" of wood should be used.
3. Brick, limestone, clapboard, cement board, wood, shingles stucco

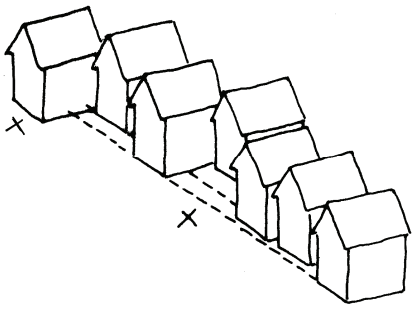
Typical Siding

Simulated grain NO!

Definition: The distance a building is set back from a street, alley or property line.

RECOMMENDED

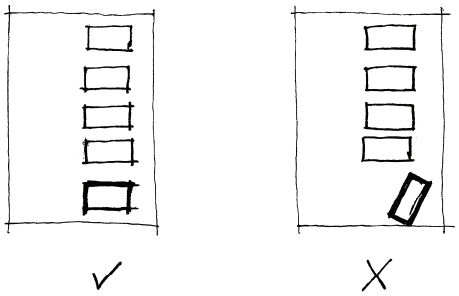
1. A new building's setback should conform to the setback pattern established by the existing block context. If the development standards for the particular zoning district do not allow appropriate setbacks, a variance may be needed
2. On corner sites, the setbacks from both streets must conform to the context
3. Structures that are much closer or further from the street than the vast majority of houses in a given block should not be used to determine appropriate setback.



ORIENTATION
Definition: The direction that a building faces.

RECOMMENDED
New buildings should be oriented toward the street in a way that is characteristic of surrounding buildings. (See Introduction for information about the traditional forms in the neighborhood.)

BUILDING ENTRY



RECOMMENDED

New construction that reflects and reinforces the spacing found in its block. New construction should maintain the perceived regularity or lack of regularity of spacing on the block.

BUILDING HEIGHTS

Definition: The actual height of buildings and their various components as measured from the ground at the foundation and from the grade of the sidewalk that the building faces.

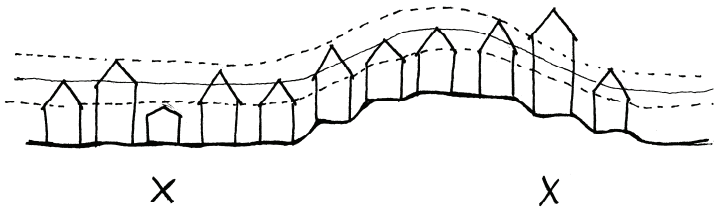
NOTE: In areas governed by this plan, building heights should be determined using these guidelines rather than those noted in the zoning ordinance.

RECOMMENDED

1. Generally, the height of a new building should fall within a range set by the highest and lowest contiguous buildings if the block has uniform heights. Uncharacteristically high or low buildings should not be considered when determining the appropriate range

2. Cornice heights, porch heights and foundation heights in the same block face and opposing block face should be considered when designing new construction.

3. Consider the grade of the lot against the grade of the adjacent sidewalk as well as the grade of the adjacent neighbor

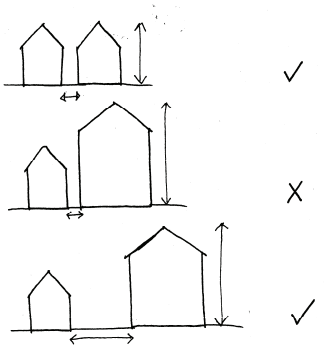


BUILDING HEIGHT/ SIDE SETBACK
Definition: The relationship between the height of the house and the distance between them

RECOMMENDED

1. A new house of the same height as existing houses may be as close to them as they are to each other.

2. A new house which is taller than the house next to it must be set back further from the side property line than existing houses.

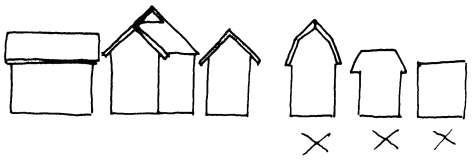


BUILDING OUTLINE
Definition: The silhouette of a building as seen from the street.

RECOMMENDED

1. The basic outline of a new building, including general roof shape, should reflect building out lines typical of the area.

Roof Shape



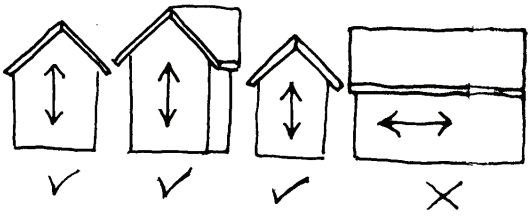
Context

characteristic of the existing building in its context.

Directional Orientation

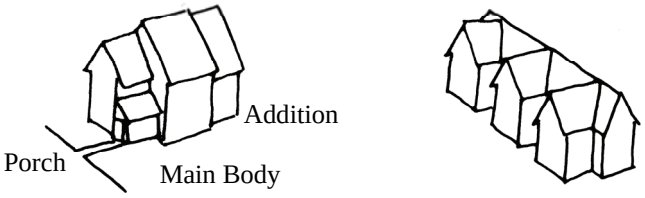
MASS

Definition: The three dimensional outline of a building. Depending on the block face, buildings in Prospect Hill may



2. The massing of the various parts of a new buildings should be characteristic of surrounding buildings.

Observe massing of building parts



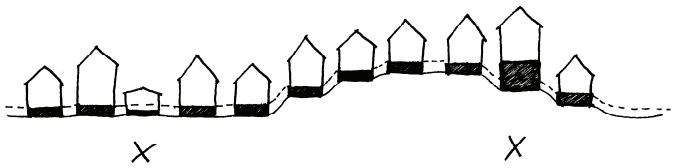
foundation height should be consistent with contiguous buildings.

FENESTRATION

Definition: The arrangement, proportioning, and design of windows, doors and openings.

RECOMMENDED

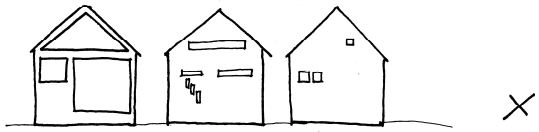
1. Creative expression with fenestration is not precluded provided the result does not conflict with or draw attention from surrounding historic buildings.



typically found on surrounding historic buildings.

ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

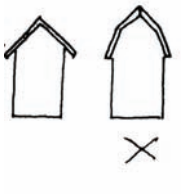
Definition : Any structure secondary to the principal building



OTHER ISSUES

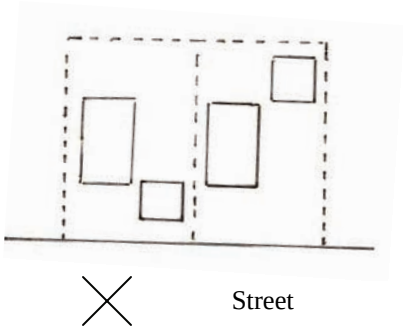
UTILITIES & EQUIPMENT

Definition: Any utilities that might be above ground and visible (such as meters and electric lines) and any mechanical equipment associated with the building (such as air-conditioning equipment).



Compatible Design

Subordinate location



Street

RECOMMENDED

Mechanical equipment, such as permanent air conditioning equipment and meters should be placed in locations that have the least impact on the character of the structure and site and the neighboring buildings.

PARKING

Definition: Locations for overnight storage of vehicles

RECOMMENDED:

1. Where possible, parking should be accessed by the existing alleys in the rear of the building.
2. Where alleys do not exist, then on-street parking is a legitimate alternative.

STYLE AND DESIGN

Definition: The creative and aesthetic expression of the designer.

RECOMMENDED

1. No specific styles are recommended. A wide range of styles is theoretically possible and may include designs which vary in complexity from simple to decorated.
2. Surrounding buildings should be studied for their characteristic design elements. The relationship of those elements to the character of the area should then be assessed. Significant elements define compatibility. Look for characteristic ways in which buildings are roofed, entered, divided into stories and set on foundations. Look for character-defining elements such as chimneys, dormers, gables, overhanging eaves, and porches. These are described in the introduction.

STANDARDS FOR MOVING BUILDINGS

Existing historic buildings in the Prospect Hill Conservation Area should not be moved to other locations in the district. The moving of a historic structure should only be done as a last resort to save a building. It may be considered when its move is necessary to accomplish development so critical to the neighborhood's revitalization that altering the historic context is justified. Moving a building strips it of a major source of its historic significance, its location and relationship to other buildings in the district. The existence of relocated buildings, especially in significant numbers, confuses the history of the district. The following guidelines are meant to assist in determining the appropriateness of moving a building.

SUBJECT TO REVIEW AND APPROVAL
Moving any building within the Conservation District
Moving any building into or out of the Conservation District

GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are enforceable by the BHPC and are less comprehensive and less restrictive than for a Historic District.

RECOMMENDED

1. The building to be moved should be compatible with the contributing architecture surrounding its new site relative to style, scale, and era.
2. Small noncontributing storage buildings (under 200 square feet) in backyards may be moved without review. Contributing accessory buildings require review according to guidelines for compatible new construction.

STANDARDS FOR DEMOLITION

A certificate of appropriateness must be issued by the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission before a demolition permit is issued by other agencies of the city and work is begun on the demolition of any building in the Prospect Hill Conservation District. This section explains the type of work considered in this plan to be demolition as well as the criteria to be used when reviewing applications for Certificates of Appropriateness that include demolition.

SUBJECT TO REVIEW AND APPROVAL
Demolition of primary structures within the boundaries of the conservation district
Demolition of contributing accessory buildings

GUIDELINES
The following guidelines relate to the above actions and they are enforceable by the BHPC. These are the same guidelines as those for historic districts.

DEMOLITION DEFINITION
Demolition shall be defined as the complete or substantial removal of any historic structure which is located within a historic district. This specifically excludes partial demolition as defined by Title 8 “Historic Preservation and Protection”

CRITERIA FOR DEMOLITION
When considering a proposal for demolition, the BHPC shall consider the following criteria for demolition as guidelines for determining appropriate action. The HPC shall approve a Certificate of Appropriateness or Authorization for demolition as defined in this chapter only if it finds one or more
of the following:

1. The structure poses an immediate and substantial threat to public safety as interpreted from the state

of deterioration, disrepair, and structural stability of the structure. The condition of the building resulting from neglect shall not be considered grounds for demolition.

2. The historic or architectural significance of the structure is such that, upon further consideration by the Commission, it does not contribute to the historic character of the district.

3. The demolition is necessary to allow development which, in the Commission's opinion, is of greater significance to the preservation of the district than is retention of the structure, or portion thereof, for which demolition is sought.

4. The structure or property cannot be put to any reasonable economically beneficial use without approval of demolition.

5. The structure is accidentally damaged by storm, fire or flood. In this case, it may be rebuilt to its former configuration and materials without regard to these guidelines if work is commenced within 6 months.

With the exception of Criterion #5, all replacement of demolished properties should follow new construction guidelines. The HPC may ask interested individuals or organizations for assistance in seeking an alternative to demolition. The process for this is described in Title 8.

PROCEDURES FOR THE REVISION OF THE PROSPECT HILL CONSERVATION DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

It may become necessary to revise sections of these guidelines within the context of the state enabling legislation. In this event then:

1. The Prospect Hill Neighborhood Association (PHNA) will draft a change
2. The change will be advertised through the PHNA's traditional information methods: e-mails and newsletters.
3. After advertisement, the change will go to the Bloomington Historic Preservation meeting for a public hearing and approval.

For more information and assistance call the Housing and Neighborhood Development office at 349-3507. A Certificate of Appropriateness application form is available to download at www.bloomington.in.gov